A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

Northampton-Shire FEAST,

NOVEMBER 8. 1683.

Being the First General Meeting of such Citizens and Inhabitants in *LONDON*, as were Born within that COUNTY.

BY

JOHN WILLIAMS, Rector of St. *Mildred's Poultry.*

LONDON:

Printed by *J. G.* for *Benjamin Alsop*, at the Sign of the *Angel* and *Bible* in the *Poultry.* 1684.

To my Honoured Friends

Mr. *John Tooley*,
Mr. *William Foster*,
Mr. *Mark Haughton*,
Mr. *John Garret*,
Mr. *Thomas Cawcott*,
Mr. *Charles Miller*,
Mr. *Robert Calcot*.

Stewards for the *Northamptonshire-Feast*.

WHatever encouragement there may be for Printing Sermons in our Age (very fruitful in that kind) yet there cannot be much expected for such as are Occasional, how pertinent and well-received soever in the Hearing: For being ordinarily directed to a particular purpose and Auditory, the Publick is the least concerned in them. And therefore since what you were entertained with (at the late general meeting of our Country-men) was of that kind, it is the less fit to appear in the World. But since you are pleased to desire

it,

it, it's not easie for me to deny it, and that to you, to whom our Country owes so much for the reviving of a useful Society out of a Charitable design; and the Society owes so much for the prudent managemment of it. To the good order of which, if this Sermon did any way contribute (as you were pleased to think) or may for the future recommend the Duties therein insisted upon to others, I shall neither repent, of First Preaching, nor now of Publishing it at your Request.

I am

Your Affectionate Countryman and Servant.

JOHN WILLIAMS.

ERRATA.

Pag. 4. l. 20. read *whom*, p. 16. l. 17. dele (;) p. 18. Marg. r. *Camb.* p. 22. l. 2. r. *yet it*.

A SERMON Preached at the Northamtonshire FEAST, November 8. 1683.

PSALM LXXXVII. 6.

The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this Man was born there.

1. THere is in all Mankind so violent an inclination toward mutual Society, that were they set loose from one another, and each man might be supposed to stand alone, they would be so far from a Posture of War, and at the first sight contending for Superiority and Propriety (as some have vainly conceived) that they would soon strive to associate, and contrive ways to bring them to each others acquaintance and Conversation.

But how forcible soever this propension in Mankind is, yet it being antecedent to humane choice, and common to bad men as well as good, it hath consequently in it nothing truly Glorious and Praise-worthy; nor is any man Wise, Vertuous, or Great, for being thus inclin'd, or for acting as he is thus naturally inclined.

Natural dispositions are useful and necessary principles of action, by exciting the powers of the Soul, and pressing us forward to act, and to act in such a way, and to such an end as may be for their gratification: but the acting according to such inclinations, being a following of Na-

ture, and in which all men also are alike; there must be somewhat else that must distinguish one man from another, the Wise from the Foolish, the Vicious from the Vertuous herein, and that is the prescribing such Laws and Measures to such inclinations; the directing them to such Objects and Occasions, as may serve to wise and good purposes, and which we our selves, or others, or both, may be the better for.

This is the design of our present meeting, and of reviving that Society (which for about Thirty Years hath been discontinued) that we who are of the same Nation, and born in the same Division of it, may be by this means the more united among our selves, and be rendred more capable of being useful and helpful to others. A Design truly Generous and Honourable, and in a sincere Prosecution which, we shall bring Honour to our selves; to our Society, to our Country, to our Church, and to God: And shall all of us be in a Capacity of having the Text applied in the benefits of it to us; that *the Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.*

This *Psalm* hath both a literal and mystical sence; In the latter it respected the State of the Church under the Gospel (often Prophetically represented under the name of *Sion*) when all Nations should be brought into the Communion of it; and *Rahab and Babylon shall be among them that know God,* Vers. 4. In the former ~~or mystical~~ sence it respected the Church of the *Jews*, and the prosperous state it should be restored to after the *Babylonish* Captivity; and notwithstanding the desolation it thereby sustained. According to which Prophetical Scheme, we may suppose the City and Temple destroyed and ruin'd, the Country wasted and depopulated, the people dispersed and Captivated, and the Church of God in a seemingly forlorn condition: And yet as deplorable as it was, better things were not to be despaired of, for the Country should be

again

again Inhabited; the City and Temple rebuilt; Religion and the Church restored; and the Nation flourish to the admiration and conviction of their most obstinate Enemies. This seems to be the subject of this Divine *Psalm*, written on purpose for the support and encouragement of those that did suffer under that sore and intolerable calamity. And it contains,

1. A Confirmation of this, from the relation which the Church had to God.

2. A Declaration of its Priviledges arising from that relation.

3. Here is a Duty infer'd from it, that they should therefore praise God for it, *vers.* 7. *As well the Singers as the Players of Instruments*, both small and great should joyn and say, *All my Springs are in thee*, that is, this Peace abroad, this Prosperity at home, doth all proceed from God as the *Fountain* of it. Psal. 68. 25, 26,

1. The Confirmation is, first, that *Gods Foundation is in the Holy Mountains*, vers. 1. There was his Temple built, the place of his fixed abode. 2*dly*. it was the place he above all delighted in, verse 2. *The Lord loveth the Gates of Zion, that is Jerusalem, more than all the dwellings of Jacob*, therefore its called *the City of God*, Vers. 3. 3*dly*. There were glorious things Propheſyed concerning it, and yet to be accomplished, vers. 3. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God*. From all which considerations they might be assured that the Church of God would revive and flourish.

2. There is a Declaration of the Priviledges, or a further description of the prosperous state of things amongst them.

1*st*. As to what it should be in the Judgement of their Enemies themselves. Vers. 4. *I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to*, or rather, among (as our former Translation very well renders it) *them that know*, or acknowledg *me*; *behold Philista, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was Born there*: that is, the greatest Enemies shall acknow-

* Psal. 89. 9. Isa. 51. 9. V. Bochart. Geogr. Sac. Part. 1. l. 4. c. 24. † V. Bochart. ibid. c. 2. Ezek. 28, 24. c. 25. 15. c. 26. 2. &c.

ledge it. *Rahab* (or *Egypt*)* their first; and *Babylon* their last Enemy. Those that were remote, and those that were near; even *Philistia* and *Tyre*, with *Ethiopia* (or rather *Arabia*; for of that is *Cush* to be understood.†) Those that by reason of their Neighbourhood had been *Pricking Bryers and grievous Thorns to the House of Israel*: Those that ruined them, and those that rejoyced in it, shall know that *He is the Lord*, and they his people, as the Prophet *Ezekiel* (speaking of this very case) doth represent it. They shall all of them account it a happy Nation, and those an happy people that he does so visibly own, Bless, and Protect; and a Priviledge to any man that *he is Born there*.

Zech. 8. 23.

This is otherwise, but somewhat more clearly, exprest in *Zechary*, in those days they *shall take hold of all Languages of the Nations, of the Skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.*

V. Dr. Ham. in loc. V. Castal. in loc.

2*dly*. There is the State of the Church described as it really should be, *vers.* 5. *Of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her; and the highest himself shall Establish her*, when as the word איש may signify a man of Eminency and Worth, in opposition to זה in the former *Verse*; So *This* and *That* signifies a multitude: Thus our former Translation reads it, *Many are born in her*. And then the meaning of it is, that *Jerusalem* and the Nation shall abound with Inhabitants, with men of renown and eminency, that shall be Honourable for Wisdom, Virtue, and Piety.

3*dly*. There is a further Declaration of God's favour towards them, that such should be honoured by him, as in the Text, *The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there*; That is, such shall be marked out by God, be esteemed by him, and be under his special care and protection. For thus do we find the Phrase used, *Ezek.* 13. 9. where its threatned to the Prophets that Divine Lies, that *they shall not be written in the writing*

writing of the Houſe of Iſrael, neither ſhall they enter into the Land.

From the Words thus explained, I ſhall take occaſion to conſider,

1. What are the Priviledges of a Place or Country that render it Honourable, and transfer an Honour upon perſons there born.

2. What is the right perſons owe, and the Honour they ſhould give to their Country.

3. How far this may concern us that are met together upon this occaſion and ſolemnity.

1. As to the firſt, The things that do render a Country or Place honourable and valuable, may be either, natural, acquired, or providential.

1*ſt*. Amongſt the natural excellencies of a Place, that which firſt offers it ſelf to our conſideration, is its ſcituation, by means of which it becomes delightful, fruitful, and ſecure. For an inſtance in this, we need look no further than the ſubject of this *Pſalm*, *viz.* the Land of *Canaan*, which was remarkable for the aforeſaid advantages, and is therefore deſervedly called the *Pleaſant Land*, Dan. 8. 7. *Pleaſant* it was in regard of its Scituation, being in the middle of the then known World, and in the fourth Climate of the Seven (which *Ptolomy* divided the Earth into, as it that time was) and ſo was as temperate in its Air, as convenient to ſerve the ends of Divine Providence, which was from thence to diſperſe the knowledg of himſelf among all Nations. Iſa. 2. 2.

Pleaſant it was in reſpect of its fertility, of which we have a full and excellent deſcription, *Deut*. 8. 7, *&c.* and an effectual demonſtration of the truth of what is there ſaid of it, *a Land wherein thou ſhalt eat Bread without ſcarceneſs, thou ſhalt not lack any thing in it*, when though it extended not much above Two hundred Miles in length, and Eighty in breadth, could maintain its numerous Inhabitants,

bitants, of the vastness of which, we may conceive by the computation of Fighting men alone, made in the
2 Sam. 24. 9. time of *David*, which amounted to a Million and three hundred thousand.

And as *Canaan* was thus pleasant, so it was also secure, being compassed with Mountains; to the *North* were *Libanus*, and *Antilibanus*; to the *East*, *Gilead* and *Hermon*; (*Psalm* 89. 13.) and the Mountains of *Moab*; to the *South*, the Mountains of *Judah*; to the *West*, those of *Ephraim* and *Carmel*; and where it was without, it had the great Sea.

And what *Canaan* was to the then known world, that was *Jerusalem* to *Canaan*, being planted near the middle of the Land; therefore its said to be in the midst of the Nations and Countries round about her, *Ezek.* 5. 5. And to be beautiful for scituation, *Psal.* 48. 3. It was also secure, as consisting of several Hills within, and compassed with them round about, as we are told, *Psal.* 125. 2. only toward the *North*, from whence its said to be on the sides of the *North*, *Psal.* 48. 3, and *Isa.* 14. 1. as it had a freer prospect to that Quarter, and not because *Sion* was on the North side of *Jerusalem*, as some Learned men have thought.

2. There are things acquired and accidental, which render a Countrey or place valuable; that belong not to it as such a particular place, but are owing either to the industry and providence, the valour and conduct of the Inhabitants, or to some unseen and indiscernible causes. Of this kind are Dominion, Wealth, and Populousness; for all which the Land of *Israel* was famous in the time of *Solomon*, who *Reigned over all Kingdoms from the River*
1. Kings 4. 20, 21. *Euphrates unto the Border of Egypt*; and had so many Subjects, that they were innumerable, and in that respect *as*
Cap. 10. 21. *the Sand which is by the Sea in Multitude*; and these Subjects so enriched, that *Silver in those days was nothing accounted of.*

Of

Of this ſort is Learning and Knowledge, for which *Egyt* firſt (ſaid to be the antient Nurſery and Mother of Sciences) and *Greece* afterwards were highly honoured and commended. *Herod.* lib. 2. c. 21. Act. 7. 21.

But that which above all makes a Country truly honourable, is the Vertue and Piety of the people, and the care taken for the encouragement and preſervation of it by good Laws, and a vigorous Execution of them. The natural advantages of a Country are common to the fooliſh as well as the wiſe, the ſlothful as the induſtrious: and of theſe that are acquired, ſome (as Dominion and Wealth) are obtained by Boldneſs and Power, Fraud and Injuſtice, or ſtumbled upon by chance and caſualty. But the Vertues of a Nation are truly their own, and make it Great and Noble wherever it is, and proſperous and ſucceſsful, for the moſt part, in whatever it undertakes. It was an Honour to be a *Roman*, when that people were (as the Hiſtorians report) vertuous, not more by Laws than Inclination: when in the firſt place they were devout in their Religion, juſt unto their Enemies, and friendly to all; when whatever Wars and Cententions they had abroad, there was no other amongſt themſelves, than who ſhould exceed in things great and generous. Nay, it was more an honour to be then a Denizon of *Rome*, and a Native of that Country, than when in future times it was made an honour by a Law, and by reaſon of its Priviledges was a Freedom worth the *obtaining with a great Sum.* Saluſt. Bel. Cat. V. Max. l. c. 1. n. 9. Act. 22. 27.

The Franchiſes and Immunities may be purchaſed, or deſcend upon a perſon (as it was with St. *Paul*) by Birth: but Vertue grows upon another Stock, and is the proper Fruit of their own care, and hath ſo great an influence upon, and doth ſo diſcernibly conduce to the welfare of Mankind, and the good of Societies, that it makes a way for it ſelf, and is more victorious than the Arms of a Nation; and whom theſe do leave unvanquiſhed, that doth often overcome. So true is that of the Wiſe man, *Righteouſneſs* Prov. 14. 34.

teouſneſs exalteth a Nation, and doth beget reverence, honour, and I may add, ſafety, wherever it is. But on the other ſide, be a *Nation* never ſo much exalted by Dominion and Power, Opulency and Wealth, and all other advantages, whether natural or acquired, and wanting in that moral accompliſhment, that it be faithleſs and perfidious, inſolent and proud, luxurious and effeminate, theſe Vices prove like Weeds in a fertile Soyl, that overtop the uſeful Plants that are therein, which make it rather a Wilderneſs than an *Eden*, and the people to be like the *Cuſhites*, who, in Scripture, are ſaid to be ſtrong and numerous, but withal very Baſe and Contemptible. For as *Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation, ſo Sin is a reproach to any People*; and as they degenerate in their manners, ſo they do decline in their Eſteem, and conſequently in their Power and Dominion. For Reputation is the ſtrength of a Nation; and the Reputation of it depending upon its Vertue; the one muſt conſequently decline with the other, and make Them in time as little feared as they are reverenc'd by their Neighbors; and then all the Policy and Power of the World cannot ſecure them, who having caſt away their beſt defence, by their Vices, make themſelves firſt the Triumph of their Enemies ſcorn, and then of their Arms. So that every Nation is ſecure according to its Reputation, and is in Reputation according to its Vertue: Let it be loſt to Vertue, its loſt to its Reputation; let it be loſt to its Reputation, it is loſt to its peace and ſecurity alſo, and hath laid its ſelf open to its Enemies; or in want of ſuch, doth by degrees diſſolve of it ſelf, and run into confuſion. But then much more is this true, if we conſider the World with reſpect to Divine Providence, which doth Crown the Vertues and Piety of a People with ſucceſs and honour (for which reaſon amongſt others, St. *Auſtin* ſaith, the ancient *Romans* were made Great and Victorious) but doth render Vice and Irreligion miſerable and infamous, and ſooner or later doth publickly

V. *Bochart. Geog.* part 1. l. 4. c. 2.

De civ. dei l. 5. c. 12. 15. *&c.*

lickly dethrone it by its all-powerful and irresistible hand; verifying therein what God once declared; *Them that honour me I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.* 1 Sam. 2. 30.

3. There are things providential that do ennoble a Place or Country, of this we have an instance before us in the Land of *Judea*, which God did choose out of the World to be the place of his special residence, and in the people whom he chose, (exercising over them a Theocratical and Divine Government) to be his Inheritance; from whence that was called an *Holy Land*, they a *Holy People*, and their Cities, *Holy Cities*: By which means they were invested with several Priviledges. Zech. 2. 12. Deut. 7. 6. &c. Isai. 64. 10.

As first they had his special Assistance and Protection, by which, they drove out the old Inhabitants (as long as they continued stedfast in their Religion) without any considerable opposition; and were secured in the possession of it, notwithstanding the ill-will, and power, the subtle practices and attempts of their Enemies; who were either over-ruled, or defeated by the special interposal of Divine Providence. Hence God is said to do all for them, *to strengthen the Bars of their Gates, and make peace in their Borders, to break the Arrows of the Bow, the Shield, the Sword, and the Battel*: And all is said to be issued from the place of his Habitation. Psalm 147. 14. Psalm 76. 1. Psalm 50. 2. 3.

2*dly*. They had thereby a greater priviledge, which was the Knowledge of the true God, and what was acceptable to him. To them *pertained the Adoption, and the Glory* (the Shechina, or Divine presence) *The Covenants, the giving of the Law, and the Service of God and the Promises*. And when such was the City, such the Country, such the people, such their Relation to God, and such their Priviledges by vertue of it; others must needs say, *Happy is that people whose God is the Lord*, and think it no little honour to be one of that Rom. 9. 4. Ps. 144. 15.

number; and him him happy of whom it could be ſaid, *This Man was Born there.*

But this priviledge did not die with that State of things: for what *Iſrael* was then to the reſt of the World, that is now the Church of God, to thoſe that are out of it; that is Chriſtianity to Judaiſm, Turciſme, Heatheniſme: And all the favours and priviledges belonging to that people heretofore are transfer'd upon Chriſtians, who are as the Apoſtle ſaith, (applying their Phraſes to this purpoſe) *A choſen Generation, a Royal Prieſthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People.* So that it is now as much a priviledge to ſay with reſpect to the Church of God, or a Nation in which that is placed, and the Goſpel received, *This man was Born there,* as it was in thoſe times, with reſpect to that Nation or City, where God was more eſpecially reſident. And truly what a Church is to no Church, that, in proportion, is a true and ſound Church to a falſe Church, and a Church dangerouſly Corrupted; and ſo much is it the honour and the priviledge of a perſon *Born there*, where the Word of God is truly taught, the Sacraments rightly and purely Adminiſtred, and the Worſhip ſolemnly performed, above what it is to be born and Educated in a Church, where Idolatry and Superſtition is Embodied into the Worſhip, and falſe Principles are received into the Doctrine of it. From whence we may eaſily obſerve what an advantage we do enjoy that are born in the Church of God, beyond thoſe that know not the Truth; and what it is that we do enjoy, in the Communion of our Church, which they do want that are born and bred up in the Boſom and Communion of the corrupted and degenerate Church of *Rome.* This is our honour and priviledge; and this doth lay no ſmall obligation upon us: And what that is, I come in the next place to enquire.

1 Pet. 2. 9.

2. What is the right perſons owe, and what honour they ſhould give to the Land or place of their Nativity.

When

When ſome of the wiſeſt and beſt amongſt the Heathen, ſuch as *Socrates*, uſed to call themſelves *Citizens of the World*, as if they own'd no relation to a particular place; it was only to blame that ſelfiſhneſs too common amongſt men, by which they did not care what wrong they did to others, provided they and theirs were ſecured; but it was not to condemn that affection which mankind generally hath to the particular place of their Nativity and abode. This I think is well repreſented by that great Philoſopher as well as Emperor, who ſaith, *My City and Country, as* Antoninus, *is* Rome; *as a Man, its the World.* For their Relation to the World did no more leſſen a due affection and care to their own particular Country or Birth-place, than he could be ſuppoſed to caſt of all regard to *Antoninus*, becauſe he conſidered himſelf as a Man. Or however natural inclinations do not ſtand or fall by the Maxims and Reaſonings of Philoſophers; but as long as men be men, and that there is ſuch a thing as a Relation betwixt men and men, or men and places, there will conſequently be affections in them ſutable to thoſe Relations in which they are. From hence it is, that Parents and Children are naturally prone interchangeably to love each other; and, to go no further, that mankind hath a reſpect and affection for the place in which they were born; and for the people, more or leſs, amongſt whom they received their Life and Education. From whence this proceeds, whether from propriety, or the poſſeſſion it took of their firſt thoughts, and earlieſt affections; or from uſe which renders things connatural to us, is not ſo eaſie to reſolve, as it is to obſerve the potency of this affection: When, whatever the Country may be, ſubject never ſo much to the extreams of heat and cold (if there be in it things neceſſary for ſubſiſtence) men generally rather chuſe the quiet enjoyment of their own, than to have their portion in another that is in it ſelf far more excellent and delightful: So the Poet obſerved of old.

Εἰς Ἑαυτὸν lib. 6. n. 44.

Quid melius Roma? Scythico *quid frigore pejus?*
Huc tamen ex illa Barbarus urbe fugit.

What more delightful than Rome? *What leſs than* Scythia? *And yet the Barbarous Native forſakes that for this.*

Let it be the Country of the *Samoiedes*, where for Six Months of the year they have one continued Night, and are ſhut up in their pitiful Huts half under ground, yet the Inhabitants prefer their manner of life before the delight of a better Climate, as a modetn Traveller relates. *

* *Olearius.*

So that there is no Country ſo bad, which thoſe that are there born do not generally chuſe: And there is no Country ſo bad, but has a right and duty owing to it from ſuch as were born there; Therein verifying that of *Seneca, Nemo patriam, quia magna eſt, amat, ſed quia ſua. No man loves his Country becauſe its great or noble, but becauſe it is his*: A Duty ſo neceſſary and obliging, that it hath been thought nothing could be too dear to part with, nothing too difficult to be undertaken for its wellfare and ſecurity; that Parents and Children, Life and Eſtate were to be ſacrificed in ſo noble a cauſe. *O fortunata mors, quæ naturæ debita, pro patria eſt potiſſimum reddita. O happy is that death, which when due to Nature, is laid down for the Country*; before the other calls for it, ſaid the Orator.

But it is not my intent, as well as it is not ſo much to my purpoſe, to conſider in general what is due to one Nation in oppoſition to another; to the Land of our Nativity in oppoſition to what is not, (ſince we are here aſſembled only as a ſmall part of the whole) as what is due to any place which we have a relation to by birth and education, whether it be a Nation, or Country, or City, or whatever bounds greater or leſs it may be circumſcribed in. To all of which there is an Honour due, and

which

which every man doth give, that discharges the duty belonging to his place and station with faithfulness and sincerity; and like a good man and a Christian, *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, doth live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world.* For as I have before shewed, that Virtue and Piety are the Honour of a Nation, so he that would do honour to his Country must live vertuously and piously. Other things we may receive from That, as Birth, a temperament of Body, some dispositions of mind, priviledges and immunities, respect derived from Ancestors. These are advantages we receive from That, and so cannot honour that by them; but piety and vertue are our own; and when we are eminent in these, the honour of it redounds to our Country and all that we are related to. For the former we are beholding to our Country; but for the latter our Country is beholding to us. And this is it that we should most of all aspire after, that we may rather chuse to do Honour to our Country, than depend upon any Honour or Advantage from it; being like *Themistocles*, that when told by a Native of the Island *Seriphus* (a place so craggy and desolate, that Malefactors were Banished thither) that he had his glory from his Country, and not from himself, replied, *If I had been a* Seriphian, *I had been Noble and Great; but if thou hadst been an* Athenian, *thou wouldst have been base and dishonourable.* It is not in our power to chuse where we will be born, or from what stock to derive our selves, this we owe to other Causes; but it is, under God, in our power to chuse whether we will be good and vertuous, and do things worthy of a Man and a Christian; and by being so we do truly honour our selves and our Country. To be an *Hebrew* of the *Hebrews*, a *Roman*, and a Scholar of the famous *Gamaliel*, were privileges St. *Paul* owed to his parentage, his birth-place, and his education; but to *live in all good conscience before God*, to do like an Apostle of Christ, and

Phil. 3. 5.

Acts 23. 1.

1 Cor. 15. 10. and to *labour* in that Office *more abundantly than all*, was an Honour that he brought to *Tarsus*, to *Jerusalem*, and was therein more an honour to them than they could be to him. Men may be honourable by what they receive from their Country, but they are more honourable for things that are honourable all the world over, and will make them honourable where-ever they are: And its by the same that they do honour their Country, by the things, I say, they receive not, more than by what they do receive from it. And therefore he that would study so to do (as every one should) let him begin here, and first of all to learn to be pious and virtuous as to himself, Acts 24. 16. good and useful to others, and in all, *to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men*, and he will deserve well of his Country, and in the highest sence be an honour to it. But on the other side, if these be neglected, and Virtue and Piety be the last things taken into consideration, the more honourable their Country is, the more blame-worthy are they that do thus detract from the honour of it, and as much as in them lies, rob it of that it hath before acquired. *Greece* was famous for a Country, *Crete* for an Island, *Athens* for a City and a place of Learning: But what a disparagement was it to have it said of the people of the first, that they were false and perfidious? of the second, that the *Athenians had excellent Laws, but perverse dispositions*? And of the last, that the *Cretians were Lyers*, &c? Let a Country be like *Canaan*, the *glory of all Lands*, and a *Land flowing with Milk and Honey*; yet if the Inhabitants, like the *Canaanites*, are vicious, and have their manners corrupted, *their Land will spue them out*, as the Phrase is, and they deserve to be blotted out of their Records and Memorials, and never to be mentioned, but as a certain Family is in our Nation, with a Caveat by the Historian, *Nomen vetustæ familiæ, verum jam damnatæ memoriæ*. Such as do break the

Valer. Max. l. 5.
Tit. 1. 12.
Ezek. 20. 16.
Lev. 18. 28.

the Laws of God and Men, by a vicious life, and infamous acts, do disgrace their Nature and their Country, themselves and their relations, do disparage the stock and the place they came from: And let them speak never so much in behalf of it, do in effect with *Coriolanus* turn their Arms upon their Country; And instead of being Friends to it, are the worst of Enemies, since they joyn ingratitude to their other faults, and take life from that (for such is honour to a Country) which gave it to them. What is it then, for a person to plead the benefit of his Country, and launch out in commendations of that, or himself from his Relation to it, if in the mean time, he doth take from himself that honour which it doth give; and doth more disgrace that by his ill qualities and bad actions, than that can honour him by all the advantages it may otherwise justly claim, or he may claim from it. Since of the two, it's far more honourable and glorious to be a *Scythian* and *Barbarian* by Country, and a wise Philosopher as *Anacharsis*, than to be born in *Athens* and be a stupid *Meltides*; better be a *Galilean*, and a Disciple of the Holy Jesus, than to be born in an Imperial City with *Julian* and be an Apostate from Christianity; better be found in the roll of those, that from an obscure place and condition, from a Town that was *little among the thousands of Judah*, and from the Sheepfold, with *David*, have advanced themselves by their prudence and diligence, their vertue and piety, than of those that amidst the advantages of Birth, Country and Education, have degenerated from all, and become like the Sons of the great *Scipio* and *Fabius*, the one of which was not suffered to wear in a Ring the Effigies, nor the other to inherit the goods of his Father. The latter are a disgrace to their Country, and such as their Friends, their Family, their Birth-place are ashamed to own: But the former do ennoble their Country and condition; and what is wanting in those to a person, he

makes

makes up in himself to them, and like the spiritual seed of *Abraham*, though *raised out of the Stones*, are far to be prefer'd before those that proceeded from his Loins. Such a man is in truth, what a *Jew* or a *Roman* once was by priviledge, Free and Great, wherever he is; and whatever his Country is, how despicable and base soever, though it be like *Istria*, which the *Venetians* were formerly forced to hire persons to live in, he will bring an honour to it, and it shall be said, with reputation to that as well as himself, *This man was born there.*

Indeed, as whatever our Country is, it should be as our Parents, a-like dear to us, so we should be as Children to their Parents, a-like dutiful to that; that so if that be dishonourable, we may be an honour to that; if that be honourable and valuable we may not be a dishonour to that. And if there be an obligation upon persons to Virtue and Piety, whatever their Country is; for the Reasons abovesaid, then surely its a right and duty we owe to our Nation, and the Land of our Nativity, as we are Englishmen: A Land that is great in every thing but extent, and what it wants in that, has in its fertility and security (*the Sea being a Rampart to it*; as the Scripture saith of *No.*) Nahum 3.8. A Land that is greater in its Constitution and Government, which, by its excellent Laws and Administration, so effectually provides for the security, quiet and comfort of the people, that of no Nation under Heaven may it be better said, that *every Man may sit under his Vine and under his figtree.* A Land that is still greater for the Church of God that is in it; a Church, that for purity of Doctrine, solemnity of Worship, and all advantages for Piety, may compare with, if it doth not exceed any Church upon the face of the Earth. So that if Plenty and Security, wholesom Laws and a wise Constitution, and the blessed effects of good Government in the State: If helps to knowledge, and means and encouragements to Piety in the

the Church, can render a Country valuable, or a Nation happy; Ours is the Country, and we are the Nation. If the being born in such a Country, Educated in such a Church, Dwelling in such a Nation, can lay an Obligation upon people and persons, we are the people and persons that are so obliged. What may not then God Almighty, the giver of every good gift, expect from us by way of thankfulness and acknowledgment for such Temporal and Spiritual Mercies? What may not the World expect from us by way of Improvement? What may not the Church of God expect from us in a way of Exemplary Piety and Holiness? What may not our Governours expect from us in our Peaceableness and Loyalty? What may we not expect from one another in Justice, Friendship, and Charity? What may we not expect from our selves, and what will not our own Consciences require of us in Duty to God and to others? And what an account for all must we expect to give another day, when *God shall Judge the World in Righteousness*? If God *hath not dealt so with any Nation*, how inexcusable are we, if we are, after all, a *Nation void of Counsel, and a People of no Understanding*? And how may we expect to find that verified in the conclusion, *therefore he that made*, and thus dignifyed *them, will not have Mercy on them; and he that formed them will shew them no favour.* So much is priviledge and duty interwoven, and so much the more are we obliged to the latter, as we do receive of the former. But though these are the Blessings we enjoy in common with the rest of our Nation, yet there are some things in that part of it, which we owe our Birth and much of our Education to, that all of the same Nation enjoy not in common with us. A County that

Isa 27. 11.

hath in it things so remarkable, as would alone be sufficient to have entertained you, and spent the time upon: But it is not fit for this place, nor will it answer the honest and good end for which we are now assembled, to make the place of our Birth, the Subject of a Panegyrick. And therefore I shall only select from the rest, what the *Psalm* may put us in mind of, and may serve to enforce our Duty upon us.

1. We may consider the Situation of *Northampton-Shire*, which is to the rest of *England*, as *Jerusalem* was to *Canaan*, and *Canaan* to the rest of the then known World, placed in the middle and heart of it; and to such an advantage, that from one Hill in it there spring three Rivers, *viz. Cherwel*, *Leam*, *Avon*, that discharge themselves into three several Seas, as the Historians do observe. From which situation it hath the fittest opportunity of communication with the other parts of the Nation, and fetching from thence what may be for its use and benefit. But,

Cumbden Brit. Bale cent. 5. num. 65.

2. However, this it hath the less need of from the fertility of the Soyl, and the plenty of all things necessary for Life that it is stored with. So that as it is with the Rivers of it that arise all within its own Bowels (in which also it resembles *Canaan*, properly so called) communicating their streams to many Countrys but receiving from none; so it is with the Country it self, that from its store doth send forth to others, but hath no dependence upon any, nor doth ordinarily stand in need to crave help from them.

3. We may add to this the variety that is in it (therein like to *Canaan*) which doth not a little contribute to the delightsomness of it, being partly for profit, partly for pleasure; and yet that variety so intermixed,

that

that the places made more especially for delight have their profit, and those that yield the greatest profit, are not without their delights also: the consideration of all which will justify the Character given of it by a Modern Historian (who else from his relation to it, might be thought too favourable) that *Northampton-Shire* is as *an Apple without a Core to be cut, or Rind to pare away.* Fuller's Worthies

4. Its no little Commendation to it, if we consider that its not only very populous, but the people generally are very industrious, and whose employment being for the most part in Tillage and Pasturage, bring them within the estimate of *Aristotle*, who saith with respect to those two ways of living, that *they are the happiest people that have from their Labour as much as is sufficient for Life, and yet they cannot be Idle.* Politic.

But then there is not only, in the first sence of the Phrase, *this and that Man* for Multitude; but also, in the latter sence of it, *this and that Man* for eminency in Quality and Condition. If we view the Country within, it abounds so in Gentry and Nobility, that the great Geographer of our Nation doth give it this Character, *Nobilium villis Excultissima*; or as the Historian fore-recited doth express it, *No Country hath more Noblemen, no Noblemen fairer Habitations.*

Consider we it again, abroad we shall find it, not only to send forth its Colonies (of which this Assembly is an instance) but also there have been many amongst them (as might easily be shewed) that have proved eminent in their Station and Employment, both in Church and State.

Let me lastly observe to you the Genius of the people in the numerous Foundations, for Piety and

rity. In the former of which, there is no County in *England*, that in my observation by Reading or otherwise, doth exceed, or so much as equal it; and that in the circumference of One hundred and nineteen Miles (which is the compass of the Shire) can shew Three hundred twenty six Parish Churches; or that at one stand can present Thirty to the Eye of the Spectator, from the Villages planted round about, as ours is observed to do.

From all which considerations that thus do transfer an Honour to the place of our Birth, there is (as far as such a Relation can do it) an Honour transfer'd to those that are there Born; and consequently there is an obligation upon such (as in the process of this Discourse has been shewed) to do somewhat that may tend to the honour of that; and to forbear whatever may be to the disparagement of it, and render them unworthy of that Character, and of the Relation they have to it.

And that you of this Society may be the more encouraged to do what becomes you (who by your appearance here upon this occasion do intend an Honour to your Country) I shall add somewhat to what has been already said in General upon the Argument; and that I may do so with the greater freedom and assurance, shall take my rise from the Tickets sent abroad for our Invitation to this place and solemnity, in which it was declared that this Society was revived *for the promoting of Charity*.

A design truly worthy and great, and so much the more fit to be revived, as there is so little of that excellent Ingredient in such meetings, that (however they may be called) for the want of it, can hardly deserve the name of Societies. And that I may the more clearly

clearly and effectually enlarge upon this Subject, I ſhall reduce what I have to ſay, to Union among your ſelves, Charity towards thoſe that want, and Sobriety in your Entertainments.

1. That which ought in the firſt place to be conſidered by you is Union amongſt your ſelves, without which, Societies muſt diſſolve, and the ends of them cannot be promoted or attained.

There is no ſadder object to a Chriſtian and peaceable mind, to one that knows how much love and Good-will, Meekneſs and Patience are the Duties and the Ornament, the Priviledge and Bleſſing of our Religion, than the diviſions that are at preſent amongſt us in this Nation, not only *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeth* againſt *Judah*, but *Judah* againſt *Judah*; there being ſcarcely (as its ſaid) a County, Town, or Village, but what is divided againſt its ſelf, and ſuffers under the Malignant influence of theſe Exaſperations.

A ſad prognoſtick or fore-runner at preſent, and if not timely prevented, a neceſſary cauſe of Ruin and Deſtruction, according to that obſervation of our Bleſſed Saviour, *Every Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf, is brought to deſolation; and every City or Houſe divided againſt its ſelf, ſhall not ſtand.* Matth. 12. 25.

There needs then no Enemy to combine againſt us, no great Skill or force to deſtroy us, for by mutual conſpiracies againſt each other, and endeavours to weaken and deſtroy our ſelves, we ſhall like *Cato* prevent the Arms of our Adverſaries, and dye by our own. And They may with more ſafety to themſelves, and with more advantage to their Cauſe obſerve our mutual animoſities, than interrupt them, and take us off from the violent proſecution of them by

displaying their own Banners, and boldly challenging us to dispute it with themselves. And yet though there is nothing that should be more industriously kept out of, nor sooner banished from Societies, because nothing is more the bane of them, than this temper, yet; it too much entertained is and cherished amongst them; and no soonercan persons come together upon any good and worthy design, than they become clans and Parties amongst themselves, and what were intended, and should have been the means of a happy Union, have become the woful Nurseries of discord and Dissension.

But, Beloved, whatever may have been the sad fate of others, I hope better things of you, and that you that are of the same Country by Birth, the same City by Habitation, and meet by joynt consent upon so generous and Christian a design of Charity, will take all due care to prevent and banish from amongst you all such evil principles of Faction and Turbulency, and avoid all such provocations as may obstruct it, and take you off from the just prosecution of it: That you that in the first place profess to honour God, by your appointed Assembly here for Divine Worship, and in the next, to do good to others, will do both by an happy Union amongst your selves.

And therefore since there is nothing, perhaps, that doth more cherish and keep up our differences than new invented names (which I shall not so far honour as to mention in this Holy Place and Service) by which those that were really no otherwise distinguished are too often distinguished, and that men may and do, too much apply to the wrong as to the right; let it be your resolution and practice to lay them aside, and leave them in the Streets, without giving them

them admiſſion into your Society. That there may be no others than what will in converſation diſtinguiſh an Honeſt man from a Knave, in the State a Loyal perſon from a Rebel: And I wiſh there were no need of any more in the Church than what would diſtinguiſh a Proteſtant from a Papiſt, or rather that there were no ſuch diſtinction at all, but that we all might return to the primitive ſtate and temper, when all of the ſame Religion were known by the one name of Chriſtians; and the Church of God all the World over being purged from bad principles, Superſtition, and Idolatry, truly ſo called, (which at preſent diſtinguiſh and divide the Church of *Rome* from the Church of *England*, and from other Reformed Churches) and from all Schiſm, and Faction that divide us amongſt our ſelves, we may come to be *one Fold* and Flock, under the one *Shepherd and Biſhop of our Souls*, the Bleſſed Jeſus, *Joh.* 10. 16. 1 *Pet.* 2. 25. But though this is a State of things that we may rather deſire than expect, and is not to be brought about without the wonderful Providence of Almighty God; yet let us next to our Prayers, that *this Kingdom of God may come*, uſe our endeavour to make up the differences that are amongſt us an effectual obſtruction thereunto.

This is a work may become the wiſeſt of men, and will indeed try the Skill of thoſe that are moſt acquainted with the paſſions of humane Nature, and the State of Affairs in the World, to proſecute, and Accompliſh; when notwithſtanding all the attempts made toward it, it has yet remained for the moſt part as it was. And therefore, when all the Arguments taken from Divine, Moral, or Political reaſons have not ſucceeded, why ſhould we not try that

that which is Artificial; which may ſerve as Mechanical ways do in ſome Operations, where Rational and Methodical Applications fail.

When a Prince of the Family of *Orange* was ſtab'd by the Murtherous hand of a flagitious Aſſaſin, and all the Art and Medicines the Chyrurgions could uſe, ſtop'd not the Flux of Blood that Iſſued from the Orifice of the Wound, they took another way, and ſtop'd it with the preſſure of mens Thumbs, till they had turned the courſe of Blood. And when we ſee that all the means and preſcriptions uſed by good men amongſt us, cannot ſtop the Flux of that Virulent humour of ſtrife and contention, let us try the artificial way before propoſed, and obſtinately reſolve to forbear ſuch Names as may well be conceived do add no little fuel and flame to our diſſenſions: Thoſe names I ſay, that divide between the Honeſt and the Honeſt, the Peaceable and the Peaceable, the Loyal and the Loyal, and thoſe that are of the ſame Communion and Church, from thoſe that are in all points of that Communion.

This is a courſe that all may obſerve, the Simple as well as the Gentle; and he that underſtands little of the State of Humane affairs as well as he that underſtands much. And therfore, if it be a means proper thereunto, no Chriſtian ſhould, and no one that wiſhes well unto our *Sion, and prays for the Peace of Jeruſalem*, will omit.

Now whether this be a means proper or no, becomes not me to be magiſterial and poſitive in (ſince it is a means rather Prudential than Theological) but I ſhall leave it to the Judgement of all Pious and Peaceable perſons to conſider, and the Experience of Mankind to anſwer for.

And

And that I shall produce a most eminent example of from the History of *Italy*. The story of the *Guelfs* and *Gibellines* is well known to the World, and the sad state of things that issued upon it. Some say (though probably it was otherwise) that the dispute began betwixt two Brothers of those names, the one contending for the right of the Emperour, the other for that of the Pope. But it soon set City against City, Province against Province, and one part of the people so against another, that they had not only different Ensigns in War, but divers Garments, Colours, and Gestures; nay they took a pleasure to be distinguished by certain motions of their Fingers and Mouths. And being thus distinguished, the Animosities remained, after the first cause was removed; and notwithstanding all attempts made toward a pacification; they pursued one another with such inveterate Rage, *Ut ferme ad internecionem certatum sit;* (saith an excellent Historian) that it wanted little of an universal slaughter. Thus it continued for above two Hundred Years, and perhaps had longer continued, if there had not been some other way taken for the extinction of that Flame that for such a long current of years had been thus pernicious. Which was put in prosecution by Pope *Clement* the 6th. who ordained, that the names of the *Guelfs* and *Gibellines* should be held accursed, and those be excommunicated that should use them by way of of distinction and reproach: And so the names falling, the contention by degrees fell with the names. And why may it not be so again? and that be done by a general consent amongst all Pious and Peaceable persons, which was done by a decree of the Pope? And I pray God it may be so amongst us; that *no Corrupt Communication*

Nauclerus generat. 24.

Platina vit. Bonif. 9.

Spondani supplem. Baron. An. 1342. 1.

proceed

proceed out of your Mouth, but (that we may conclude this Advice with the following words of the Apostle) *Let all bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil speaking be put away from you with all Malice. And be you kind one to another forgiving one another even as God for Christs sake hath forgiven you*, Ephes. 4. 29. 31, 32. If this be done, there is a good foundation laid for you to raise *your Superstructure* upon.

2. Let me recommend to your consideration, the Duty of Charity usually so called, in the care of those the World frowns upon, and God in his Providence hath bereft of those Comforts and Accomodations we do enjoy. You cannot reflect upon the state of your Country, and what your Predecessors have done in order to so good an end, by the Foundations raised for the Service of God and relief of the Indigent, without observing the Honour that thereby redounds to that, and the President you have to follow according to your Ability.

This is a debt you owe to God that hath Blessed and prospered you in the World, and which (I perswade my self) you are this day met with thankfulness to acknowledge; and with a resolution to express it by *not appearing before him Empty*, Ex. 23. 15.

When *Vespasian* came to be Emperour, he used frequently to visit *Cajeta* where from his Infancy he had been brought up under his Grandmother *Tertulla*, and chose to have the Town continue as it then was, that it might bring his former condition fresh to his remembrance, as the *Roman* Historian relates. And if we would make a right estimate of our condition, and the obligations we are under to the Divine Goodness, we could not be amiss to trace our lives back,

and

and to consider the several steps by which we have from our Childhood been brought to the present State in which we are. How God hath made our ways prosperous, *and our latter end to increase* beyond our *beginning*, as *Bildad* said, Job 8. 7.

This is a duty you owe to your Religion, which as it makes it our Duty, so the honour of it is concerned, that we should convince the World, that as much may be done in Charity where the opinion of merit is not, as where it is made a property to provoke men to it.

This is a Duty in which the Protestants of the Church of *England* have outdone those of the Communion of the Church of *Rome* (as has been proved by others, allowing time for time,) the Citizens of *London* have outdone others: And perhaps there may be a way found out in which you may exceed the rest of the City, though not in the greatness yet in the prudent distribution of your Charity.

The Forreign Churches amongst us have no such publick provisions made for the Poor, nor are enabled to compel their Members to contribute to their relief: And yet through the prevalency of a good Custom, and forward examples they are of themselves so Charitable; and by the diligence, prudence and faithfulness of those to whom the care of the publick flock is committed, the Charity is so well bestowed, that none are found to beg in the Streets, nor to supplicate others for their benevolence; (except those whom the present storm of the persecution in *France* hath drove hither for Refuge) though their Numbers are great, and the Families dispersed from one end of the Town to the other. And it is an answer we have always ready at hand, if any such apply themselves

to us, that they are already provided for, and that they either need it not, or are not worthy of our Charity.

And this will be a worthy example for you to imitate, and it would be an honour to you and your Country, if there could be such a way found out for collecting, receiving and disposing of your Charity, that all that need, and are able to work may be Employ'd, or by being put out to Apprentiships, may be fitted for it; all that cannot work, may be relieved; and all that will not, may be stigmatized and branded.

This will be a Charity indeed, and perhaps may be of more use than to found and endow Hospitals, and Alms-Houses; and in which you will be exemplary to others, and benificial as well to posterity as the Age you live in. This will *be better than the name of Sons, and of Daughters*, and when time and other reasons have worn out Families (as its easie to shew it in the place of our Nativity) this will embalm your memories, and (to make use of the Prophets phrase) will *give you an Everlasting name that shall not be cut off*, Isai. 56. 5. This will secure your Estates, entail a Blessing upon them and your posterities, as we are assured, Ps. 25. 26. *I have not seen the Righteous (or Charitable) forsaken nor his Seed begging Bread. He is ever merciful and lendeth; and his Seed is Blessed.* Nay, if the Apostle be to be regarded, such as *do good, are Rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to Communicate, do lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, and lay hold on Eternal life.* 1 Tim. 6. 18, 19.

3. Let me recomend to you Sobriety in your entertainments. This I think my self the rather obliged to take notice of, since if what has been of late the practice in some Societies, should be transfer'd into all,

and

and that Intemperance should hold on the pace, which for some years past it has been observed to take, all Societies would be dissolved, or which is as bad, rendred useless and unserviceable and all their wise and good ends propounded in their first Foundation and Establishment be utterly defeated.

Then all good and sober men must exclude themselves thence, and it would be as unfit for such a one to appear there, as it was for a Vertuous *Cato* to be present at the Floral Games, and the Bestial practices, used in honour (as they pretended) of their gods, and when either they will be Rude to him, or he must be rude to them.

Ahasuerus was no less generous in the liberty he gave his Guests, *by a Law that none did Compel*, than in the plenty and abundance he entertained them with, *Esther* 1. 7, 8. And I think he pays very dear for his Meat and Drink that is despoiled of, or denied that Liberty; and can purchase his admission into the Company at no less a price than the loss of his reason and innocence; and to make himself ridiculous to men; and hateful to God.

Therefore since Charity amongst your selves, and Charity to others, is what you propound to your selves, and declare to others to be your Design in your Society, let it be your Care so to manage it, that this so excellent an end may not be frustrated, and you lose the Company, and that be deprived of the best members of it; I mean such as are truly Sober and Vertuous, and you in the conclusion break up that Society you have begun to Establish.

If

If these be the measures you observe and keep, and the Society be thus regulated and carried on, it will be truly glorious, good, and useful. And that it may be prosperous, and live as long as there is a County to supply the City, and a City to receive members from the County will be the hearty prayer of all concerned in the welfare of both. Then you will honour both, and it will be the conclusion of all, that God himself *shall count when he writeth up the People, that this man was Born there. Selah.*

FINIS.